

Beyond the Search Engine: Using Google Databases for Genealogy Research

Google has a number of databases and functions that we can search and/or use, such as Google Books, Google Scholar and others that are useful to us as genealogy researchers. Here is an overview of some of these databases and functions:

- **Google Books** has a seemingly never ending supply of digitized books. And there is an ample amount of old books that can be used in your genealogy research. Generally, there are two types of entries: books that are digitized and full text of the entire book is available online, and books where only partial sections or pages are available, and only snippets of your resultant search results provide useful information. The URL is <https://books.google.com/>
- **Google Patents** presents a search engine to find old patents from around the world. Personally, I found that five of my ancestors held patents, much to my surprise, and several of them were from the 1800s! The URL is <https://patents.google.com/>
- **Google Cache** provides the ability to see a previous version of a web page. This is particularly useful when you get a 404 Error and/or a "File Not Found" page when going to a website. Just enter "cache:" in front (do not enter the quotes) of the desired webpages URL, and it will take you to the previous version.
- **Google News Archive** unfortunately is no longer adding new titles to its collection, but it still is searchable. You can see the list of over 1,400 titles and search the collection at this URL: <https://news.google.com/newspapers?hl=en>
- **Google Scholar** (From Google): provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites. The URL is <https://scholar.google.com/>
- **Google Images** has over 28 Billion images in its database. Similar search functions as in generic Google Search are available. There also is a reverse image search. This is particularly useful for genealogists as it may find other researchers who have the same or similar photo as that of your ancestor that you are performing the reverse image search for or even an image base somewhere with pertinent photos.. The URL is <https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en>
- **Google Maps and Google Earth** are particularly useful for genealogists as we can see visually what a house, business, or other property looks like. Also creating custom maps of our ancestors residences can also provide us with genealogical clues. The URLs are <https://www.google.com/maps/> and <https://earth.google.com/web/>
- **Google Translate** is very useful when attempting to convert written documents, letters, or other material from the language of the "old country" to current language. There are over 100 languages available. The URL is <https://translate.google.com/>
- **Google Alerts** is an excellent resource for genealogy researchers. It is like having a constant search running all the time. It won't necessarily search inside databases or their records, but if a mention of a person, surname, or whatever else you set the Alert up for occurs, you will be sent an email. It can be your secret weapon! The URL is <https://www.google.com/alerts>